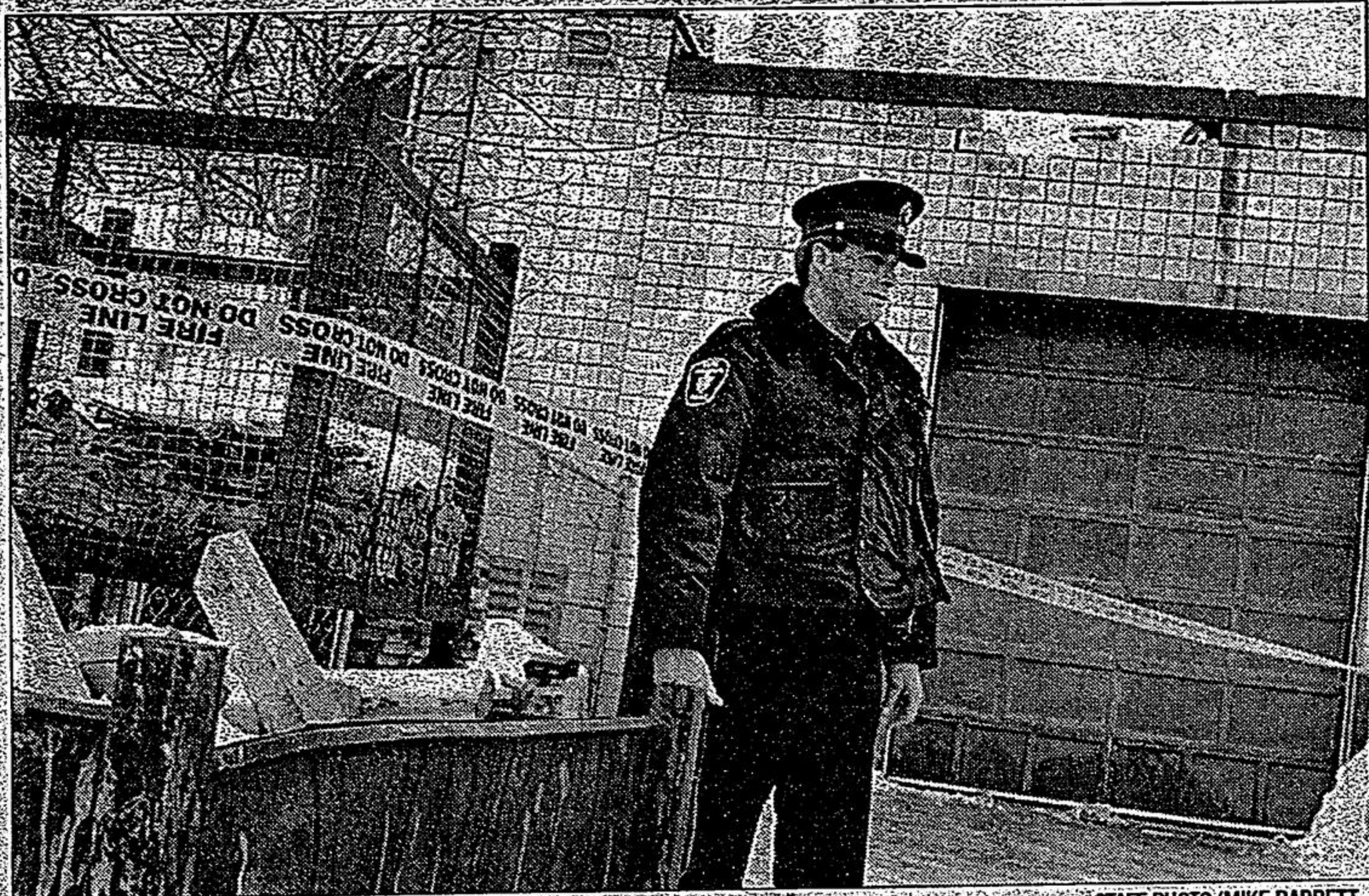


REGIONAL WEATHER

Employee hurt as roof collapses



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

A York Regional police officer stands at the scene of a collapsed roof on Medallion Industries in Vaughan. Melting snow is being blamed.

BY CHRISTOPHER DOURIS
STAFF WRITER

A change in a work schedule may be responsible for saving 14 lives at a Maple fencing company.

In fact, 28 employees were indoors when the roof at Medallion Industries caved in Monday around 9 a.m.

Vaughan Fire Department Platoon Chief Bill Ryddell said snow from last week's storms, as well as melting snow, were to blame for a section of roof coming down at the facility, located at Keele Street, just south of Teston Road.

York Regional Police Const. Ron Ralph said all employees were evacuated and no one was injured when the section of roof came down.

Ryddell said there are usually close to 14 people working in the area where the roof collapsed, but a change in the company's schedule resulted in that part of the building being unoccupied.

The building was cordoned where the roof collapsed while an Enbridge Consumers Gas employee circled the building to ensure the natural gas feed to the building was shut off when it was learned the collapsed roof severed a gas line, causing the evacuation of the immediate area.

Sunday's sun and warm temperatures melting the snow where the roof of one building joined a rise in an adjacent building, caused a 30-foot section of the roof to collapse. The building houses three related companies.

Water from melting snow streamed out of the building through an open garage bay door and pooled at the entrance to the property.

Meanwhile, the entire building has been condemned until engineers have a look at it, Ryddell said.

"The first (fire) truck shut it down immediately," Ryddell said.

"We've got Consumers Gas to confirm everything is shut down in the entire building."

While he had no idea how much the snow weighed, Ryddell said it would have to be "in the tonnes" to buckle steel beams and separate the roof from its brick supports.

One Medallion employee, who wished to remain anonymous, said "the damage is worse than the incident". Other workers refused to comment.

Mani Navabi, the city's director of building standards, said the city has issued an unsafe order and was in the process of issuing an order to prohibit occupancy.

The melting snow buckled steel beams and separated the roof from its brick supports.

"We'll be getting an engineer's report," Navabi said, "about the cause of the collapse, the remedial action taken, what order and how."

He said the exact cause of the collapse is not known. Obviously, there was some loading due to snow," Navabi said, but "they may have (also) suspended something from the ceiling."

There is no set time limit for the engineer's reports, he said, adding that the engineers will have to be hired by the building owner.

"No one is going to enter the building until we have those reports," Navabi said.

According to Vaughan assessment information, the building is owned by Sidney and Evelyn Isenbery, of Richmond Hill.

The owners could not be reached for comment.

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LIBRARY NEWS: Anyone missing their marriage certificate?

Researching family history can be addictive

Somebody has left a valuable piece of their family history in the library photocopier and we'd like to return it to its owner.

Last September we found a marriage certificate.

It's an original document about six and a half inches by fourteen inches. It seems to have come from England, specifically, The Parish Church in the Parish of St. Mark Ford in the county Borough of Plymouth.

The marriage took place on August 16, 1958. If you think this could be part of your family history, call the library at 640-2395.

Of course, if you're interested in starting your own family history there's a program you may be interested in attending in February. On Feb. 6 and 13, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Ruth M.

Burkholder will help you get started or continue to find information about your family.

The sessions will cover very generally where to look and how to organize what you find. After this start you can sign up for a more in-depth two-week session in March. For more information about these sessions, drop by the library for a brochure or call and ask for Catherine.

If you'd like to get an idea of what's involved in this research, drop into the library and look at some of the local census records or the local newspaper on microfilm.

It's a challenging endeavour, but much like eating chips — once you start, you just want to try one more roll of film, one more lead from the census, one more.

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